

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

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Between Gisburn and Colne in Lancashire on the Blacko mile rides the ghost of a highway man his name was Hamish Wigglesworth also known as (The Butcher) In the heart of Lancashire, where the misty moors stretched far and wide, lay a stretch of road known as the Blacko mile. It was a place of beauty and intrigue, but it held a secret that sent shivers down the spines of those who dared to travel it at night. For in that very place, between the villages of Gisburn and Cole, the ghost of a notorious highwayman named Wigglesworth, also known as "The Butcher," was said to roam. Legend had it that Wigglesworth was a man of imposing stature, standing at a towering six feet tall and weighing a hefty eighteen stones. His physical presence alone was enough to strike fear into the hearts of even the bravest souls. But what truly set him apart was the eerie sight that greeted those who encountered him on the Blacko mile. As the moonlight cast its ghostly glow upon the road, travellers would glimpse the figure of Wigglesworth standing defiantly in the centre, his pistols held firmly in his phantom hands. But the sight that sent chills down the spine was the fact that Wigglesworth had no head upon his shoulders. A gruesome and unsettling sight, it was said that his headless spirit was forever trapped in a state of torment, cursed to roam the very road where his life had met its gruesome end.

Wigglesworth's tale was one of both villainy and tragedy. In life, he had been a local butcher, a man who roamed the countryside visiting farms with his gleaming knives and cleaver axe. His job was to slaughter the cows, pigs, and sheep that would eventually find their way onto the plates of the villagers. But he had also been a man of vices, known for his amorous escapades with the local ladies. One fateful day, Wigglesworth's lustful pursuits led him into a dangerous liaison with a farmer's daughter. Caught in the act, their transgression was met with a swift and brutal reckoning. Enraged beyond measure, the farmer seized his axe and, in a fit of rage, beheaded Wigglesworth where he stood. The very same axe that Wigglesworth had once used to end the lives of countless animals now ended his own. The farmer, now both judge and executioner, buried Wigglesworth's headless body in the fields behind the Moorcock Inn, a place that would forever be tainted by the memory of that gruesome deed. The years passed, and the tale of Wigglesworth became woven into the fabric of local lore, passed down through generations as a cautionary tale of the consequences of one's actions. And so, even now, in the dead of night, the ghostly figure of Wigglesworth, The Butcher, roamed the Blacko mile. His headless form a chilling reminder of the sins of his past, forever cursed to wander the very road where his dark journey had come to a horrific end. Travellers and locals alike would speak of the eerie sensation that washed over them when they crossed that haunted stretch of road, a feeling that the restless spirit of Wigglesworth still lingered, forever seeking some form of redemption or release from his eternal torment.

By Donald Jay.